



# Joseph's Brothers

Genesis 42

# Joseph's Brothers

**Begin with prayer**

**Read:** Genesis 42

**Listen: THRU the BIBLE:** [Genesis 42](#)

*Dear God,*

*Bring to the surface anything in us that is unconfessed and unresolved. Give us the courage to face it, and grace to find restoration*

*Amen.*



## Jacob Sends His Sons to Egypt



**Genesis 42**

The famine hit Jacob's family hard. They were looking for ways to survive. Jacob heard that Egypt had grain to buy, and so he got his ten sons together and said, "Go to Egypt and buy us some food!"

Jacob had faith, and he coupled it with action. He believed the corn would bring them life, so he acted on his belief. That is the same as saving faith.

How can one believe in Jesus? The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved ..." (Acts 16:31). You hear something, and you believe it. That is what Jacob did. That is how he brought life to his family. The way we get eternal life is through faith in Christ.

Why did Jacob only send ten sons? Wasn't there one more son? Yes, but Jacob favored Benjamin and couldn't tolerate the risk of losing him. After all this time, Jacob still hadn't learned his lesson about favoritism. What if danger came upon the other ten sons? It was a risk he didn't mind taking. Joseph and Benjamin were Rachel's sons. He had already lost Joseph. Benjamin was his last link to Rachel, the wife he deeply loved. So now he sent out all ten and kept only Benjamin with him.

God was actually working another plan with the famine. He wanted to get Jacob's family out of Canaan, away from the sins of the Canaanites, and bring them to Egypt to settle in the secluded spot of Goshen.



## Joseph Recognizes His Brothers

In Egypt, Joseph was busy distributing the food to all the foreigners who came for help. You have to wonder if he kept a special eye out for his brothers among the delegates from all over the world. He knew they would have to come. So he watched.

Then came the day when ten men walked into the room, and all bowed down on their faces in front of Joseph. You have to wonder how he felt. Do you think Joseph remembered his dream from decades before? Ten sheaves of wheat bowing down to his sheaf? Now it was taking place right in front of him.

Joseph recognized his brothers; why didn't they recognize him? First, they thought he was dead. Or at least they never expected to see him again. But Joseph did expect them. Also, more than 20 years have gone by. Joseph was now almost 40, and he was dressed like an Egyptian and spoke and acted like an Egyptian.

## Joseph Tests His Brothers

The first thing Joseph said to them was, "Why are you here?" He spoke roughly to them, to test them. He accused them of being spies. "No, we are ten brothers." They confessed that they really are 12 brothers, but one was home with their father, and the other "was not." They considered Joseph dead, but there he was standing in front of them!

Joseph continued the test. For the third time, he accused them of spying. "Prove to me you're not spies." And he put them all in prison for three days to think about it. The truth is, Joseph was working out a plan. He wanted to see his full brother, Benjamin. These men are really his half-brothers. On the third day, Joseph told them, "Do this and live, for I fear God" (*Genesis 42:18*).

He went on to say, "If you're as honest as you say you are, one of your brothers will stay here in jail while the rest of you take the food back to your hungry families. But you have to bring your youngest brother back to me, confirming that you're telling the truth. And not one of you will die." So, the brothers agreed.

## Joseph's Testimony To God

Joseph never missed an opportunity to give a testimony for God. Certainly, he was giving one here. He always gave God the glory as the One who was directing his life. The statement "I fear God" should have encouraged the brothers to believe that they would be treated justly at his hand.

The brothers were grown men, some over 50 years old. They're in a tough spot. Something about this scene also brought back the guilt they shared in Joseph's mistreatment, two decades earlier. They said, "Now we're paying for what we did to Joseph. We saw how terrified he was. He begged us for mercy. But we didn't listen to him. Now we're the ones in trouble."

While they talked among themselves, they spoke Hebrew. Joseph understood every word. Up till now, Joseph communicated with them through an interpreter, posing as an Egyptian. They're actually confessing their guilt to Joseph without realizing it. They think that what's happening to them was God's vengeance on them for what they did to Joseph, and they were repenting before God.



# Joseph's Tears Uncover His Love

Joseph heard every bit of it and was moved to tears. He would have loved to throw his arms around each one of them and call them “brother.” But he had not revealed himself yet, because he wanted to see Benjamin.

The brothers agreed among themselves that Simeon would stay while the rest returned to Canaan. Joseph was so emotionally charged by all this that he had to excuse himself to weep privately. He then washed his face and came in again as if nothing had happened.

The brothers bought grain, but Joseph commanded that their money be given back to them, hidden in their sacks. He also gave them food and provisions for their trip. On the way home, they opened their sacks and discovered the money. They were terrified! They already felt like this ruler was suspicious of them. They thought this could be a trick. Now he might accuse them of stealing the money. They decided to bring the money back with them when they returned.

## What Will Jacob Say?

When the nine brothers returned home and told Jacob, their father, what had happened, Jacob was overwhelmed. “First, I lost Joseph. Now, I’ve lost Simeon. And you want to take Benjamin?”

Poor Jacob. He was not the trickster he used to be, but he’s also not the man of faith he will be. But he was growing. Reuben made his dad a promise to bring Benjamin back alive. But Jacob’s life was wrapped up in his boy, Benjamin. He was the son of his right hand. He was Jacob’s walking stick; Jacob leaned on him. “No, I won’t let Benjamin go down to Egypt.”

Meanwhile, Simeon sat in prison back in Egypt.



*Joseph would have said the same thing that Paul wrote: all things work together for good to them that love God.*

”



# God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from *Genesis 42*

1

**Sin unconfessed will surface and God orchestrates reckoning:**

Twenty-plus years after selling Joseph, the brothers immediately felt the weight of their guilt. God did not let it go. This is not vengeance - it is the gracious discipline of God, bringing men to a place of repentance. (*Galatians 6:7; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9*)



2

**Faith pairs belief with action:**

Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, believed it, and sent his sons. That is saving faith - not passive, but active and obedient. In the same way, true faith in Christ is the soul casting itself on Him, not mere intellectual agreement. (*Acts 16:31*)



## Reflection Questions

### Question 1

**On Unconfessed Sin:** Are you carrying guilt from something done to a brother, sister, parent, friend, or colleague that has never truly been confessed or made right? Don't let it go underground for another twenty years. What is one step you can take this week toward confession and restoration?

### Question 2

**On Acting on Your Faith:** Jacob didn't just believe there was grain, he sent his sons. Is there an area of your life where you believe something about God or His Word but have not yet acted on it? What would it look like to move from belief to obedient action this week?



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